

**AMENDMENTS****In the Specification:**

Please amend the paragraph on page 4, lines 9-16 as follows:

With reference to Figure 2, one embodiment of a knife assembly 14 according to the present invention is shown. The knife assembly 14 includes blade 50 having a cutting portion 54 including leading edge 58 and a trailing edge 62 which meet at leading point 66. Leading point 66 is used to penetrate the ply stock S upon downward movement of the knife assembly 14. In the preferred embodiment, the knife blade 50 is "hawk-billed" in shape with the leading edge 58 being curved in profile with a concave portion followed by a convex portion, as shown in Figure 2, and the trailing edge 62 presenting a straight profile. As best shown in Figure 4, the cutting portion 54 of the blade 50 is tapered to effectively cut ply stock S. Both the leading edge 58 and the trailing edge 62 are tapered in the preferred embodiment.